

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON 20 OCTOBER 2014**

**Present:** Councillors Stokes (Chairman), Brown, Sanders, Harrington, Murphy, Okonkowski and S Lane.

**Officers in Attendance:** Belinda Child Head of Housing and Health Improvement  
Dania Castagliuolo Governance Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor John Fox. Councillor Lane was in attendance for Councillor John Fox.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

**Item 4 Parish Councils Roles, Responsibilities and Sustainability**

Councillors declared that they were parish Councillors for the following Parish Councils:

- Councillor Brown – Eye Parish Council
- Councillor Harrington – Newborough Parish Council
- Councillor Stokes – Orton Waterville Parish Council
- Councillor Okonkowski – Orton Longueville Parish Council

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings Held on 1 September 2014**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2014, were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Parish Councils Roles, Responsibilities and Sustainability**

The report was introduced by the Head of Housing and Health Improvement to provide Members with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of Parish Councils. The report highlighted the current opportunities open to Parish Councils which would support their viability and financial sustainability.

The following key points were also highlighted within the report:

A parish Council had the overall responsibility for the wellbeing of their local neighbourhood. Their work fell in to three main categories:

- Representing their local community
- Delivering services to meet local needs
- Striving to improve quality of life within the parish

A Parish Council could also provide, maintain or contribute to the following services:

- Allotments and leisure facilities
- Bus shelters and litter bins
- Car parks and local illuminations
- Community centres, parks and open spaces
- Community safety schemes planning
- Community transport schemes
- Public lavatories
- Crime reduction
- Street cleaning measures
- Cycle paths and street lighting
- Festivals and celebrations
- Tourism activities
- Traffic calming measures

The Community Capacity Team were currently working closely with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) to promote the opportunity for additional local interest groups to explore the creation of new community or Parish Councils in their area. The following local groups had expressed an interest in exploring this opportunity:

- Paston
- Walton
- Stanground
- West Town, Westwood and Ravensthorpe
- Dogsthorpe
- Fletton and Woodston

The Commission was asked to note and support the range of current activities underway, as highlighted in the content of the report and to offer observations and further recommendations for how the council and its partners could actively ensure all was done to ensure their long term viability and sustainability.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members referred to page 7 of the report (4.2), where it stated Parish Councils were made up of "numbers of elected members" and commented that some parishes were made up of co-opted members only. *The Head of Housing and Health Improvement responded that that this was just the terminology used in the report and not all Parish Councils had elected Members.*
- Members commented that Parish Councils were keen to take on extra work from Peterborough City Council and expressed concern that Parish Councils would lose interest over time. *Members were advised that this would depend on Parish Councils and the community. The Community Capacity Team were available to support Parish Councils with this work.*
- Members were concerned with where funding would be sourced from, if no new developments had taken place in villages to enable them to receive Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. *Members were informed that if no new developments took place in a ward then there would be no CIL funding entitlement.*
- Members queried if neighbouring villages could join in with a development plan. *Members were advised that it was not possible to cross parishes, the CIL funding would be allocated to the parish which was having development.*
- Members expressed concern for the cross over between Parish Councils and City Councils, if urban areas were parished. *Members were advised that the best way to deal with this would be to work in partnership having cooperation and understanding.*

- Members queried how the Commission could involve Parish Councils in the development of the Rural Strategy. *Members were advised that it was up to the Commission how they would like to involve Parish Councils.*
- Members asked how many villages had Neighbourhood Plans in place. *Members were informed that there were not many, only Ailsworth.*
- Members commented that Parishes were not keen to produce Neighbourhood plans due to the constant change in criteria after they had applied a great deal of work in to a project. *Members were advised that Neighbourhood Plans were seen as evidence based because they included consultations with local residents.*
- Members commented that they felt very uncomfortable with some villages receiving 15% of CIL funding and some 25%.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Commission agreed for the Head of Housing and improvement:

- To seek a legal view and advise the Commission on what happened with CIL funding if villages reached their growth limit.
- To advise the Commission what the projected figure was for CIL funding.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Commission recommended to the Director of Growth and Regeneration that indicative Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for villages was identified over the next five years, and that Parish Councils were assisted with developing Neighbourhood Plans.

## **5. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Commission received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which contained key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Commission's work programme.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Commission noted the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decision and requested further information on the following decisions:

- Libraries and Community Services.
- Section 75 Agreement with the Clinical Commissioning Group for the provision of a Joint Child Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Unit.
- Formalise integrated Community Equipment Service Funding and Commissioning Arrangements.
- Installation of solar voltaic panels (PV) to schools.
- Residential and Nursing Care Contracts.
- Fit to rent scheme.

## **6. Work Programme**

Members considered the Commission's Work Programme for 2014/15 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

## **AGREED ACTION**

Members noted the work programme and agreed for the Cabinet Member for Housing and planning Services, who now had a new responsibility for rural communities, to be invited to future meetings.

### **7. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 17 November 2014.

*The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 7.35pm*

CHAIRMAN